



MG Bentz Speech
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Good morning, and thank you, Colonel Bradley, for the introduction.

I am honored to be here and appreciate the opportunity to speak to you today. I would like to thank the Defense Strategies Institute and all of the sponsors for hosting and supporting this conference, bringing focus on the IED threat.

Looking at the presenters on today's agenda, I am among friends, and this is an excellent forum to discuss our common goals. Not unlike the blind men who were asked to describe the elephant (one had the ear, another the tail, and the third the trunk), our unique angles and different vantage points in describing the pervasive challenges that the improvised explosive device presents, if properly exploited, can enable us across the EOD, Countermine and C-IED communities to advance a community of action, leveraging each other's ideas and discussing our varied capabilities to help defeat this threat.

In my remarks today, I will focus on three areas: the evolving threat, the new JIDA, and this idea of a community of action.

Threat

The threat is truly global, with repercussions across domestic, defense, and coalition lines. One important lesson we've learned is that the battlefield today is not the same as yesterday.

We are all too aware of how the IED became our enemies' weapon of choice as they executed insurgent tactics in Iraq and Afghanistan. The impact of

these crude weapons changed how we fought. Not only was the IED the cause of the vast majority of our KIAs and WIAs, IEDs decreased our agility (impacting our relationships with the indigenous population and COIN) and maneuverability (hampering our combat power and raising the uncommon possibility of failure). This quickly made IEDs a “tactical weapon with strategic effect.”

In response, the military had to rapidly develop and deploy new tools and tactics to increase force protection and improve maneuverability. This challenged us to change how we anticipate threats and react to warfighters’ immediate needs; the greatest lesson learned from those fights. While today’s battlefield and mission are different, we must carry forward that lesson.

We no longer think of our adversaries as simply “terrorists” or “insurgents.” Today, ISIL is a prototype State with its own army; including precision guided munitions (using suicide bombers as their guidance systems), ISR (using easily purchased UAVs), and other signatures of a well-organized army. They are manufacturing and employing IEDs like never before. In Iraq, we no longer go after the lone bomb maker using the biometrics found on a single bomb to link him to multiple incidents because we now face IED factories on an industrial scale with supply chains and funding lines that rival Fortune 500 companies.

The adversary is employing IEDs differently. Today, in Iraq, IEDs have become the basis of their combined arms campaign, executed with precision at an operational level of war, helping our enemy gain and keep terrain. Tunnels, Waterborne IEDs, Mad Max-like vehicle borne IEDs – all are synchronized to take a city from our Iraqi partners in well-planned operations.

Meanwhile, our mission is different. With fewer troops in contact serving as advisors and trainers from behind the wire, how do we access information to stay ahead of the threat? Information has been and always will be the fuel that allows us to be anticipatory and rapid in our response. Our enemy is continuing to advance his methods and use of technology. And with fewer U.S. boots on ground, our visibility into these advances becomes more uncertain.

About JIDA

Let me turn to our organization, JIDA and our role in addressing the threat.

You may recall that JIEDDO was created to defeat the device, attack the network, and train the force. Our “special sauce” was the ability to operationalize collected information in order to rapidly identify and respond to adaptations in the TTPs and also to assist targeting efforts on the networks that were brought to light. Earlier this year, the Deputy Secretary of Defense designated JIEDDO a combat support agency and we were renamed JIDA: the Joint Improvised-Threat Defeat Agency. His guidance was to keep our eye on what the next IED-like threat will be. As an agile, rapid-response mechanism for improvised threats that requires a temporal, near-term solution, JIDA has been given the latitude to use our “special sauce” on emerging challenges such as tunnels, toxic industrial chemicals, and unmanned aerial or ground systems, to name a few.

We are keeping our eyes out on the technologies that will matter in the future and prepare accordingly. Because even if we don’t know what a future improvised threat will look like, we need the ability to quickly react once we do.

JIDA does that by operating in the seam between responding to warfighter needs and navigating DoD systems. We have established processes to

anticipate and begin solution development—as the need unfolds—using well-established bridges between innovators and rapid acquisition methods.

Our concurrent acquisition delivers solutions quickly, while also allowing for improvement, development, and redesign by more deliberate means with the warfighter always in mind. This system applies not only to materiel acquisition, but also to data solutions, analytics, training, and a host of other support JIDA can deliver.

Our mission has expanded and at the same time our resources have been reduced. JIDA’s budget is an order of magnitude (90 percent) less and manpower has been reduced by 60 percent. This requires that we relook how we do business in order to continue to anticipate warfighter needs. While JIDA still makes monetary investments toward urgent needs, it now more heavily relies on collaboration with a community of action to seek solutions.

Community

Which brings me to this – what do we mean by a “community of action”? We have worked hard to build relationships and open the lines of communications with a variety of partners, including with many of the folks represented here today. In so doing, we’ve formed a constellation of public and private organizations that, when required, voluntarily act in concert. We leverage each other’s unique ways and means toward achieving common goals and addressing crosscutting problems. This is what I think of when I use the term “community of action” where information sharing and collaboration among us is imperative.

Let me give you three of these “community of action” efforts with which I am personally involved.

The Huntsville Framework

JIDA has served as the coordination and facilitation element in support of the FBI's Terrorist Explosive Device Analytical Center (TEDAC) Huntsville Framework initiative. The Huntsville Framework seeks to facilitate coordination and collaboration among the DoD, Justice, Homeland Security, and FVEY partners with regards to collection, forensic and technical exploitation, and analysis of the IED threat. The framework will preserve, advance, and standardize counter-IED skills and education within the whole of Government and Rest of World fashion.

On October 30, JIDA and other senior counter-IED stakeholders met to better understand how integration with the Huntsville Framework initiatives can directly benefit their respective organizations and to lay out a path forward.

The International Counter IED Forum

Second, the Australians hosted the first annual International Counter IED Forum this past September in Canberra. Focusing on four key pillars of information sharing, control of IED components, partner capacity, and public awareness, this global alliance is an ambitious effort of over 70 countries in partnership with INTERPOL.

JIDA will continue to assist in the strategy formulation of a global alliance that tackles the IED challenge. I'm looking forward to the 2016 forum, hosted by the UK to drive action in the various strategy working groups from this year's forum. We hope to achieve outcomes comparable to the Nuclear Security Summit and the Global Health Security Summit with focus on voluntary contributions for the stakeholders. I encourage you to engage with our U.S. delegation on areas you'd like this venue to tackle.

Counter facilitation of IED precursors flowing through Turkey into Iraq

Third, JIDA recently met with the World Customs Organization's Programme Global Shield and highlighted the massive quantities of IED precursor material being brought into the Levant from Turkey. The goal is to raise customs officials' awareness of the potential catastrophic effects of unmonitored IED precursors and the inherent danger of these commodities being diverted for illicit use. This December, we will send two planners to Ankara, Turkey, to socialize IED facilitation-concerns, proposed lines of efforts, and where a community of action may be able to best assist them in their ongoing IED efforts.

These examples represent preventive, collaborative, and responsive solutions within our vast community and demonstrate the new paradigm. In order to maintain the requisite expertise, processes and organizational focus in this fiscally constrained environment, we must coordinate effectively and invest efficiently.

Summary

I see JIDA's role within this community as an enabler of this collaboration to accomplish military objectives, but certainly willing to share our expertise for other applications outside of DoD, just as we capitalize on yours. Sharing information, leveraging access, creating awareness, and connecting networks solve operational problems. Information and intelligence sharing, exchange of liaison personnel, building partner capacity, and developing complementary activities across governmental, international, and private-sector lines will reduce the IED threat.

Thank you for your attention this morning, and I look forward to our continued close cooperation in the future. I welcome your questions.